

Please amend claims 1-3, 8-10, 15, 28 and 30, and please cancel claim 29, as indicated below.

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(7 pages total)

1. (Currently amended) An electronic purchasing system, comprising:

a process manager system configured to automatically process electronic purchase requisitions over multiple back-end resource servers, wherein the process manager system is configured to access a plurality of catalogs containing descriptions of goods and services pertinent to a procurement environment;

a database configured to store data descriptors describing items contained in said catalogs, and configured to store data object and attributes pertinent to said electronic purchase requisitions; and

a line item approving system configured to, responsive to receiving a particular purchase requisition associated with a particular purchasing requisition request, process approval of a plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing purchase requisition on a line-by-line basis, wherein one or more approvers are identified for each of the plurality of items, wherein to process approval the line item approving system is further configured to present to a particular approver only those items for which the particular approver is identified, and wherein the items for which the particular approver is identified are less than all of the plurality of items specified in said particular purchase requisition.

2. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 1, wherein the process manager system is configured to generate an approval graph of identified approvers of the plurality of line items specified in said particular purchasing purchase requisition, and wherein for each identified approver said approval graph indicates the items for which the approver is identified.

3. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 2, further comprising an automatic notification service configured to automatically detect a line item approval in said particular purchase requisition and notify approvers in said approval ~~matrix~~ graph only if they are identified approvers of an item approved by said line item approval.

4. (Original) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 3, wherein said automatic notification service is an electronic mail service.

5. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 1, wherein said line item approving system comprises an approval matrix configured to associate an identified approver with each line item and conditions related to approval authority in said particular purchase requisition.

6. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 1, wherein said line item approving system comprises a workflow module configured to coordinate said approval process between approvers identified for said particular purchase requisition.

7. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 6, wherein said line item approving system further comprises a workflow case module configured to store a plurality of workflow tasks defining a unit of work for each identified approver in said particular purchase requisition.

8. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 7, wherein said workflow tasks further define operations that each of said identified approvers perform in relation to said particular ~~purchasing~~ purchase requisition.

9. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 8, wherein said operations comprise approving a particular line item in said particular ~~purchasing~~ purchase requisition.

10. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 9, wherein said operations further comprise declining said particular line item in said particular ~~purchasing~~ purchase requisition.

11. (Original) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 10, wherein said operations further comprise reassigning approval of said particular line item in said particular purchase requisition.

12. (Original) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 11, wherein said operations further comprises delegating approval of said particular line item in said particular purchase requisition.

13. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 2, wherein said process manager system comprises a workflow control module configured to monitor and track approvals by identified approvers specified in a purchase requisition.

14. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 13, wherein said process manager system further comprises an approval graph generator configured to generate a matrix of identified approvers for purchase requisitions submitted to the electronic purchase system.

15. (Currently amended) An electronic purchasing approval system, comprising:

a line item approval module configured to, in response to receiving a particular ~~purchase~~ purchasing requisition associated with a particular purchasing request, process approval of a plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing requisition on a line-by-line basis, wherein one or more

approvers are identified for each of the plurality of items, wherein to process approval the line item approval module is further configured to present to a particular approver only those items for which the particular approver is identified, wherein the items for which the particular approver is identified are less than all of the plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing requisition; and

a process manager configured to manage the approval process in said line item approval module.

16. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said process manager comprises a graph generator configured to generate an approval graph of identified approvers of the plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing requisition, and wherein for each identified approver said approval graph indicates the items for which the approver is identified.

17. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 16, wherein said process manager further comprises an automatic notification service configured to automatically detect a line item approval in said particular purchasing requisition and notify approvers in said approval graph only if they are identified approvers of an item approved by said line item approval.

18. (Original) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 17, wherein said notification service is an electronic mail service.

19. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said line item approval module comprises an approval matrix configured to associate an identified approver with each line item and conditions related to said approver's approval authority in said particular purchasing requisition.

20. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said line item approval module comprises a workflow module configured to coordinate said approval process between approvers identified for said particular purchasing requisition.

21. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said line item approval module further comprises a workflow case module configured to store a plurality of workflow tasks defining a unit of work for each identified approver in said particular purchasing requisition, and wherein said workflow tasks further define operations that each of said identified approvers may perform in relation to said particular purchasing requisition.

22. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 21, wherein said operations that each of said identified approvers may perform in relation to said particular purchasing requisition comprise:

approving said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition; and

declining said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition.

23. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 22, wherein in response to an identified approver declining said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition, the line item approval module is configured to generate a dummy file comprising one or more declined line items.

24. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 22, wherein said operations further comprise reassigning approval of said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition.

25. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 22, wherein said operations further comprise delegating approval of said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition.

26. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said process manager comprises a workflow control module configured to monitor and track approvals by identified approvers specified in a purchasing requisition.

27. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 16, wherein for each identified approver, said approval graph includes an indication of the approver's actions regarding approval of each item for which the approver is identified.

28. (Currently amended) A line item approval method in an electronic purchasing system, comprising:

receiving a purchase request cataloged in a plurality of documents by said electronic purchasing system, said purchasing request comprising goods, services and supplied information defining purchasing parameters specific and unique to a particular purchasing professional;

generating an approval matrix defining a list of a plurality of approvers responsible for approving line items in said purchase request, wherein each line item ~~may be~~ is associated with a respective approver;

distributing said purchase request to said plurality of approvers to approve said line items in said purchase request associated with each of said identified approvers on a line-by-line basis, said distributing comprises presenting to a particular approver only those line items for which the particular approver is identified, and wherein the items for which the particular approver is identified are less than all of the plurality of items specified in

said particular purchasing request, wherein each approver approves only their associated line items; and

generating a purchase order in response to said purchase request, said purchase order being generated based on line items approved by said plurality of approvers.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 28 ~~[[29]]~~, wherein said purchase order is generated irrespective of a non-approval of a line item in said purchase request by one of said plurality of identified approvers.

31. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein said line item by line item approval comprises providing a requisition in-box for notifying each of said approvers when a line item in said purchase request requires their approval.

32. (Original) The method of Claim 28, wherein said approval matrix provides a list of approval conditions associated with each one of said plurality of approvers.